

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested. Claims 1, 8 and 15 have been amended. Claims 1, 2, 4 - 21 are currently pending.

Rejection based on 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 15-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Office Action states, “[I]t is unclear if the notification item icon is actually displayed in the notification area, apart from the notification, or if there are two identical icons being displayed with one in the area and one outside of the area.”

Claim 15 has been amended to cure this indefiniteness. Claim 15 now recites displaying “a notification item icon in the notification area” and also displaying “a visual representation of the notification item icon” in a display area apart from the notification area. Given this amendment, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 15, as well as claims 16-21 which depend from claim 15, are in condition for allowance.

Rejections based on 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-2 and 4-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Moon et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,385,662 (“Moon”) and Cecchini et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,790,122 (“Cecchini”). Claims 15-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being anticipated by Oran et al., U. S. Patent No. 5,757,371 (“Oran”) and Moon.

Claims 1- 2 and 4 - 14

Claims 1-2 and 4-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Moon and Cecchini. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection because neither Moon

nor Cecchini disclose each and every limitation recited in independent claims 1 and 8, as amended.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants object to the combination of Moon and Cecchini as there is no suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or from the prior art, to modify or combine the teachings of Moon and Cecchini to achieve the claimed invention. While these references both teach techniques for removing items from the view of a user, they address significantly different deficiencies in the prior art and offer significantly different solutions to such problems. Moon addresses the problems surrounding inactive notifications that a user has chosen to ignore. Moon teaches removing these notifications after a period of time and placing them in a history file. In contrast, Cecchini seeks to maximize screen display area “without sacrificing the user’s ability to navigate through graphic and other data. Cecchini, Abstract. To this end, Cecchini, teaches navigation controls that are presented or hidden depending on the position of a mouse cursor. Thus, Moon and Cecchini offer significantly different solutions to significantly different deficiencies in the prior art. Further, even if the disclosed teaching of Moon and Cecchini *could* be combined, the “mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination.” *In re Mills*, 916 F.2d 680, 16 USPQ2d 1430 (Fed. Cir. 1990). The prior art does not suggest the desirability of this combination. Accordingly, there is no motivation to combine these references.

The Office Action states, “Moon fails to explicitly teach upon receipt of a user input indicating a desire to view the notification area icon, redisplaying the notification area icon in the notification area.” For this element, the Office Action relies on Cecchini. Cecchini teaches an interface for navigating through an electronic software application. The interface of

Cecchini includes a set of navigation controls such as a page turn icon. These controls are hidden from view until the user moves a mouse pointer to a screen location known as a “hotspot.” When the pointer is in a hotspot, the navigation controls will be presented to the user, and the user may indicate desired navigational commands. Movement of the mouse cursor away from the hotspot will cause the controls to be hidden. In sum, Cecchini provides an interface that presents and hides certain navigation controls based on the position of a mouse pointer.

Claim 1 has been amended and now recites “upon receipt of a user input indicating a desire to view said notification area icon, redisplaying the notification area icon in the notification area and repeating said monitoring and said hiding.” Similarly, amended claim 8 recites “upon receipt of a user input indicating a desire to view the hidden notification area icons, repeating said displaying each of the notification item icons in the notification area [and] repeating said hiding after said preset threshold of inactivity is met.” Neither Moon nor Cecchini disclose these steps.

Moon does not redisplay the notification area icon in the notification area and handles inactive notifications by redisplaying them in a history file. Moon, col. 5, ll. 7-9. Cecchini displays, hides and redisplay navigational controls based only on the position of the mouse pointer and without regard to inactivity. Neither reference, however, discloses re-displaying an icon in the notification area or re-hiding after a period of inactivity. Thus, the combination of Moon and Cecchini do not teach the method recited by claims 1 and 8. Accordingly, Applicants submit that independent claim 1 and claim 8 are in condition for allowance.

Furthermore, Applicants submit that dependent claims 2, and 4-7, which depend from claim 1, are in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons discussed above with

respect to claim 1. Applicants also submit that dependent claims 9-14, which depend from claim 8, are in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons discussed above with respect to claim 8.

Claims 15-21

Claims 15-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being anticipated by Oran et al., U. S. Patent No. 5,757,371 (“Oran”) and Moon. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection because neither Oran nor Moon discloses each and every limitation set forth in amended, independent claim 15.

The Office Action relies on Oran to teach an interface for allowing user selection of display properties for notification items. For example, the interface of Oran includes an option to “Show the clock.” With this control, the user can decide whether or not a clock will be displayed in the notification area. However, as stated in the Office Action, “Oran fails to explicitly teach at least one of the user-selectable hiding behaviors includes hiding the notification item icon when a preset threshold of inactivity is met.”

Moon also does not teach user-selectable hiding behaviors that relate to inactivity. Moon teaches removing a notification message from the message area after a fixed period of time. Once the message is removed, it is logged in a history file that may be accessed by the user. The Office Action states that it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of Oran and Moon to produce user-selectable hiding behaviors that include hiding the notification item icon when a preset threshold of inactivity is met.

Neither Oran nor Moon, however, teaches allowing user-selection of different inactivity-dependent hiding rules for the notification items. Stated another way, neither reference teaches allowing the user to choose which items will be hidden after a period of

inactivity and which inactive items will not be hidden (i.e., remain visible). In contrast, amended claim 15 recites “receiving one or more user inputs associating said inactivity hiding behavior with at least a portion of said notification items.” Responsive to these one or more inputs, the method of claim 15 applies different inactivity-dependent hiding rules for different notification items; notification items associated with the inactivity hiding behavior are hidden “from view after said preset threshold of inactivity is met,” while notification items not associated with the inactivity hiding behavior are displayed “without regard to said preset threshold of inactivity.” This claim language represents a critical distinction between the claimed invention and the references; namely, the references do not teach allowing the user to select which notification items will be removed from view after a period of inactivity and which items will be displayed without regard to inactivity.

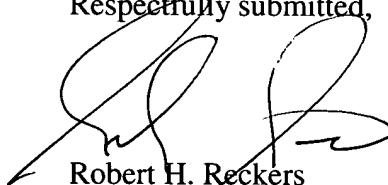
Applicants also respectfully point out that the references do not suggest the desirability of user-selection of inactivity-dependent hiding rules. In fact, the reference that contemplates inactivity-hiding, Moon, teaches away from varying the displaying/hiding characteristics of different notification items. One of the problems addressed by Moon is that different messages may be displayed in different manners and in accordance with different rules. Moon, col. 2, ll. 11-27. To solve this problem, Moon simply eliminates the different categories of messages. Moon, col. 3, ll. 27 – 30. “The present invention totally eliminates the use of the pop-up box and routes all messages with their associated event actions to the status bar where the user has the option of responding immediately or positing action until a more convenient time.” Moon, col. 3, ll. 30 – 34. Thus, by eliminating different categories of messages, Moon explicitly teaches away from treating messages differently and displaying/hiding messages in accordance with differing rules. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit there is no motivation to combine

Moon and Oran to achieve the method of claim 15, and Applicants submit that independent claim 15 is in condition for allowance. Furthermore, Applicants submit that dependent claims 16 - 21, which depend from claim 15, are in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons discussed above with respect to claim 15.

Conclusion

For the reasons stated above, claims 1, 2, and 4 - 21 are now in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the pending rejections and allowance of claims 1, 2, and 4 - 21. If any issues remain which would prevent issuance of this application, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned prior to issuing a subsequent action. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional amount required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-2112.

Respectfully submitted,



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